

McNairy County Independent.

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NEW YORK LETTER

Editor Independent:

This monster New York is growing like a snowball that is rolling down hill; it is a magnet that attracts human elements from every cranny of the globe. This morning I saw women from Albania and Serbia carrying casks of fruit on their heads; heard Italians and Syrians chattering at their little huckster stands; talked with Germans from Berlin (who think that no country but theirs can possibly be in the right); chatted with a Greek fruit dealer; may eat my evening meal at a Spanish restaurant where I will meet and speak with natives of Andalusia, Barcelona, Madrid, Cuba, Porto Rico and the Philippines; there are sections big enough to make an ordinary city, each crowded to suffocation with outlandish, ill-fed, ill-smelling foreigners. From the Brooklyn Bridge entrance, down Park Row, that great, silent stream of humanity is flowing, all southward in the morning; all northward in the evening. Since I came here eight months ago, more people have passed Frankfort street than there are souls in the whole country. On one day last fall the police counted 296,200 persons that passed that corner in daylight hours, and there were 7,000 vehicles besides. But the vehicles on Fifth avenue are simply amazing. I recently rode down that avenue from Fifty-fifth street to Park Row, in a taxi-cab, and it was like a river of taxi-cabs, in the stream of which we could only float as fast as the stream would allow. When I went to cross the avenue on foot at Fifty-fifth street, I had to wait my chance to dash in among the flood of automobiles, taxis, motor-cycles, as well as occasional horse carriages. Just escaping from the wheels of a monster touring car driven by the bespectacled chauffeur of one of the "Van Astorbits", I ran right in front of another honking engine of destruction, jumping to the left in the nick of time, only to be brushed by a motor-cycle going like lightning the other way, and just as I began to breathe a sigh of relief, another auto tooting a horn that sounded like the crack of doom, bore down on me from the other direction, and as far as I could see in any direction, there were those autos, their honking horns making one tremendous blast, while the air was full of petrol smell and fine street dust. No wonder there is an average of one death a day from these vehicles. I somehow crossed the street, and a blue-coat on the other side said it was not a busy day; I ought to see it on one of the big holidays! I want to be somewhere else then.

Why are all these people coming to New York? The city is too big now. Extending subways build out into the suburbs, which in turn build up in big apartment houses, which soon fill up, and that brings more subways and elevated railroads. Only for a very few are the big rewards in city life; millions must sink in misery. There is not one chance in a thousand for a country boy to succeed here. Even if he should get money (New York's religion) he will lose the capacity to enjoy it, which means that he has gained nothing. And he will lose that precious jewel of sincerity and truth—perhaps; all New York is not bad, but the tendency is that way, and human weakness is more common than is strength of character.

It is a common thing for a young man or woman to come here with bright hopes, clean character and good health, with a modest portion of money; and within a year or two lose everything worth living for. Fifteen thousand whisky saloons beckon to them, and the darker damnation of immorality lurks for them on a thousand streets. God and the Great Adversary of man know what becomes of them. Those who have grabbed their pitiful little earnings of patri-mony, and ruined them, body and soul, care no more for them than they do for the orange peel they have thrown in the gutter. Those glittering lights and revolving electric signs on Broadway, "The Great White

Way, The Street of the Midnight Sun," shine no more for those poor victims; they simply drop out, and are known no more. It is estimated that one hundred thousand young women are attracted to New York each year, from the smaller towns and country districts. There is not honest work for all of them. Three-fourths of them had better stayed away, or died in their cradles. O, yes, there is Mary Pickford, moving picture actress, whose income is \$4,000 a week (and she can't properly use one-fourth of it); and there is Charlie Chaplin, called "the king of the movie comedians," who the other day signed up a contract for a salary of \$870,000 a year, or nearly \$4 for every working minute of every day (and he can't properly use ten cents on the dollar) "just to make a dog-goned fool of himself," as somebody said of him. O, yes, New York has the money, and if you can amuse it, you will get rich. But think of the millions of boys and girls who have no genius, but who might have lived and died happy in their country homes but for this grinning Moloch that swallowed them and their little all.

I heard a powerful sermon the other night at the St. Nicholas avenue Presbyterian church. The minister, Dr. Brown, told of a family who had come from the country to New York City, to seek wealth and happiness. Among their possessions was one of those big Family Bibles which in the old country home in Ohio used to hold the place of honor on the center table. Between the old and the New Testament was the record, telling of the births, deaths and marriages in the family. In the narrow rooms of their little apartment, away up in a big stone building, there was no room for the big old Book; they had ceased to read it anyway, and its teachings were so out of tune with this city's ways that it was positively ridiculous. The old religion, the faith of their parents and of their country neighbors, was first tiresome, then foolish, then unendurable. They moved from one apartment to another, as the janitor or the other cooped-up inmates became uncongenial, and finally, one morning, the garbage man found that old family Bible in the ash-can, ready to be carted away to the dump. What had that family gained by coming here?

It is no wonder that a millionaire business man of this city, who came here from the country to make his riches, full of bitter feeling about city life, even where he had made his wealth, gave vent to the following terrible words, which were given me by a friend of the man who wrote them, and which have become famous, although the author remains unknown:

"Vulgar of manner, overfed, Overdressed and underbred, Heartless, Godless, Hell's delight, Rude by day and lewd by night; Dwarfed the man and large the brute, Ruled by Jew and prostitute; Purple-robed and pauper-clad; Rotten, raving, money-mad— A squirming horde in money's mesh— A wilderness of human flesh, Craved by avarice, lust and rum— New York, thy name's delirium!"

No one who has ever looked as I have upon the yelling hordes in the Stock Exchange and heard the din and seen the "squirming of the mob of money-mad" creatures, the ticker tapes in long white threads filling the air like spider-webs, can say that the above picture of avarice is over-drawn, except that it does not pretend to give the bright side of New York, which is here too, for those who seek it. This city is a ladder as well as a pit, but the seekers of the pit are in the majority, and it is so much easier to fall than to climb. Why not stay in your sweet country home, where you do not have so far to fall. He who sticks near to mother earth cannot fall very hard.

A bright, really bright, boy wrote me from McNairy county some time ago, asking whether I could find a place for him here. He has ideas beyond the raising of corn or cotton, and had a writing style of no mean ability, in writing that letter. I would like to see him, but I do not want him to bring his youth, his mind and his heart to this hard market. If he just has to leave McNairy (and I would be sorry for it if he did, for the county needs more like him) let him begin his career nearer home, and

then, when he is ripe enough for New York, let him come—but not for years yet.

Worse than low prices for crops, droughts, floods or insect pests, is the picking up and leaving of the brawn and sinew, the best men and women, from a country community. There are lots of well-to-do people in and around Selmer. Look at the Adams, Alexander, Abernathy, (all the A's this time, but there are others) and other families, who have stuck to their home town and prospered. They have more money than thousands of just as smart people who came here to get rich, and what is far better, they know what to do with it. Clem Lea might have had a Fifth avenue mansion, a half-dozen autos, a French chauffeur and an office on Wall street with millions in the City National Bank if he had come here forty years ago; but Clem knows what is good for him, and is wise in sticking to the good old soil of McNairy, where his smiling fields and his grunting herds of Berkshire pigs are a source of real pleasure to him, an example to his neighbors and an actual unit in the nation's wealth and strength. P. H. Thrasher might have been hailed as "Colonel", and sat on the board of aldermen, and helped show up graft; ye editor might have presided over the destinies of the hourly "Pink Screamer", but he prefers to spend his gentle joy each week to his old neighbors and friends by disseminating the local news and giving me room to spread myself at will in these long-winded articles from the great, wicked, splendid city; and our friend Thrasher is happier and better off in McNairy, where his sterling example will have perhaps even a more lasting effect, and where he is not bothered with rotten Tammany politics.

I wrote the young man something like this: The great electric lights on Broadway attract multitudes of insects, which fall dead at the foot of the dazzling glow. New York wants you for what you can give it; but cares nothing else about you. Stay where you are now happy and secure; marry one whom you have long known, and safe in the love of one good woman (one is a plenty), "rejoice with the wife of thy youth", and train up your children as you were trained, to love God and your neighbor. Help build up your home county and town; they need you; New York does not. Above all, keep the dew of youth in your heart. God pity the McNairy boy who is not thrilled when the young leaves come out in the tree tops, when the birds sing, and the little rills go curling their prattling waters toward the creeks, and the may-apples begin to spread their little green tents in the bottoms, and the red-buds light their cool torches on the hills; who does not love the smell of the soil as it turns before the plow-share with a homely perfume that is more precious in its promise of fruitage than a whole perfume factory here; who does not yearn at the close of an earnest day's work for a plunge in the creek under the hazel and alder bushes, and in whose heart there is not thankfulness that he can rise with the sun in the morning and plow, hoe and harvest for his own meat and bread. And sweeter that meat and that bread (to say nothing of that golden butter, creamy clabber and all sorts of good things from the garden) that is prepared and set before him by loving hands, than all the foreign delicacies that will be served up to-night at Rector's and Delmonico's in this place of jaded appetites and broken conscience by waiters from France and Greece.

It is no exaggeration to say that year in and year out, the average farmer in McNairy will have more actual wealth than the same man or woman in this city. Yesterday I saw thousands of store clerks going home, on Thirty-Third street. Their pale faces and abstracted looks did not tell of happiness, health or contentment. As I looked at them, I thought of my mother's favorite quotation about "The dwarfing city's pale abortion". All McNairy needs now is more people to stick to its opportunities and improve them to the utmost with modern methods of farming and marketing. Above all, boys, stick to your home! I would have been happier and richer if I could have done so.

So my young friend writes me from Selmer: "Tennessee, I hear you calling me."

LINDSAY S. PERKINS.

Circuit Court Proceedings

Judge S. J. Everett opened court Monday morning, with Nat Tinton, attorney general; J. W. Gray, sheriff; and J. B. Graham, clerk, on duty.

The charge was given to the grand jury, composed of the following good and lawful citizens:

GRAND JURY

U. S. Alexander, foreman; W. J. Tackett, R. F. Beard, W. P. Perkins, W. T. Landreth, W. M. Ledbetter, R. T. Rains, Roy Sharp, C. V. Brown, John Wilkins and Homer O'Neal; J. C. Bolding, officer.

TRAVIS JURY

Chas. Dunaway, J. M. Ingle, T. J. Huggins, Lee Browder, G. W. Tanner, J. M. Miller, Everett Meeks, S. S. Smith, J. A. McCaskill and J. M. Crocker.

CIVIL DOCKET

J. R. Gooch vs. T. O. Carmen. Compromised; costs divided.

T. P. McCullar vs. J. R. Gooch. Jury and verdict for \$825 and atty. fees.

J. A. Tull & Son vs. Tom McCone; judgment for 92 cents and costs divided.

J. J. Abernathy vs. J. O. Dobbins; judgment for \$4.50 and costs.

Palmer Savers Co. vs. J. E. Powers; judgment against deft. for \$310 and costs.

J. A. Riddle vs. D. C. Gooch; deft. dismisses appeal and J. P. judgment affirmed.

J. E. Hodges vs. S. H. Wilson; compromised.

Selmer Merc. Co. vs. Jerry Miller; condemnation of land and order of sale.

Selmer Merc. Co. vs. S. W. Sweet; motion to dismiss amended with condemnation and order of sale.

J. F. Gooch & Son vs. Sam Gibson; condemnation and order of sale.

J. C. Gilchrist vs. A. H. Gilchrist; motion to dismiss overruled and continuance on application of petitioner.

J. H. Howell vs. Southern Railway; suit for value of horse. Jury trial; verdict for \$85.

Disposition of State cases will be given next week.

The grand jury returned 19 indictments.

Court adjourned Wednesday.

Some Fishing Trip

BY THE PLUMBER

By 6:45 a.m. Sunday morning we had our "prairie schooner" loaded and we piled in ourselves, bound for the Tennessee river. My! but we were a motley looking bunch. There was "Sporty" Perkins all dressed up as if he were going to see his best girl and were traveling De Luxe style, instead of riding incognito on a wagon bound for the bottoms. The cook said his costume was only twelve hours from Fifth avenue. Never having been to Fifth avenue, I suppose the cook was right. And there was "Party" Gooch, "the best looking guy in the camp" and a real lady-like old gentleman he was. Riding the seat with myself was that wonderful expounding kid, James Penimore Ammons. His costume made him show up a second Villa. Really, all that he lacked resembling Villa was mustache. The cook and the Plumber looked as if they were going ditching. I was about to leave out the owner and driver of our "schooner". He still wore his wedding suit, and all the way talked about getting back to his "dear little wife", before dark. If James F. hadn't resembled Villa so much, I would say that we were another punitive expedition in search of Villa.

While passing through Adamsville,

"Squire Wesson tried to have us arrested for going fishing on Sunday."

Between home and our camping place we devoured twenty ham sandwiches, five large onions, fifteen hard boiled eggs, and about twenty peanut butter and pimento sandwiches.

We arrived at "Camp Fun" about 2:30 in the afternoon and pitched our tents. After getting our tents up we then put everything in "camp shape." My! but fish sure will bite some on Sunday. (?) The rest of the afternoon we spent in reading and cracking Sunday School (?) jokes. Villa (James F.) said he was "delighted with the surroundings" and we all hollered "amen, amen." We were all glad to get away from town and hoped we wouldn't see a single person the whole time we stayed. But we hadn't been there long until a native of the bottoms dropped in and told us of a certain wild man, which in his haunts had been seen bathing in a pool of water near our camp. This didn't sound good to the Plumber and I don't think any of the rest considered it good news. We turned into our pallets about nine. I didn't sleep any for thinking about the wild man. The other boys said they couldn't sleep any for the mosquitoes, but I know what was the reason; they too, were thinking about the wild man. I always slept between a rifle and shot gun. Believe me, we had enough artillery to whip out a regiment of wild men.

Monday we hunted and fished all day, despite the rain. Tuesday we caught a nice eight pound cat and some smaller ones. Every fourth hour we went swimming. At night we sat around the camp fire and told lies, jokes, etc.

The rains caused the river to rise a little Tuesday night we caught about twenty-five pounds of fish.

Sunday night a fox attempted a raid on our storage tent, but the raid was frustrated by us opening fire with our artillery. Really, we thought it was the wild man paying us a visit. After we shot a round or two, and after Mr. Reynard had retreated, "Party" Gooch, who had slept through it all, awoke, stood up, flourishing his young cannon and very excitedly said, "Where is he? Where is he? Give me a shot at him!" Gooch said he thought the wild man was upon us.

"Sporty" Perkins and "Villa" Ammons certainly have had very adventuresome lives, from the wonderful tales they tell, and they can tell one right after another, too. They are a Captain Kidd and a Black Beard if all of their exploits are true. Talk about a good cook! we had one. We had mulligan stew, fish broiled over the hot coals and fried in the pan, chipped potatoes fried brown, corn fried dry, bacon fried to a crisp, oyster soup, salmon croquets, etc. Really, our menu would make Lindsay Perkins desert New York city. "Villa" Ammons certainly did have a ravenous appetite. He ate ten big pieces of fish and didn't even "croak".

We embarked for home with twenty-five pounds of fish tied on behind our "schooner". The first fellow we met on reaching town wanted to know how much we paid for our fish.

Oh, yes, I was about to forget something. "Sporty" Perkins got the hatchet mixed up with the scout ax, and it required the assistance of (newly-married) Stiles to untangle the matter.

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